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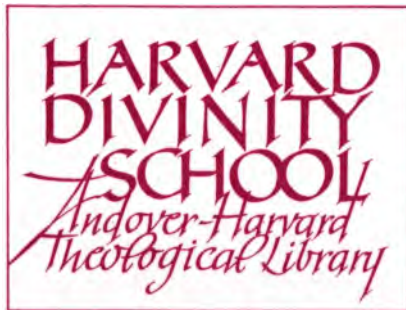
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**HANDBOOK for  
Unitarian Congre-  
gational Churches**

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*Pamphlet series. No. 2.*

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**H A N D B O O K   F O R  
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G A T I O N A L   C H U R C H E S**

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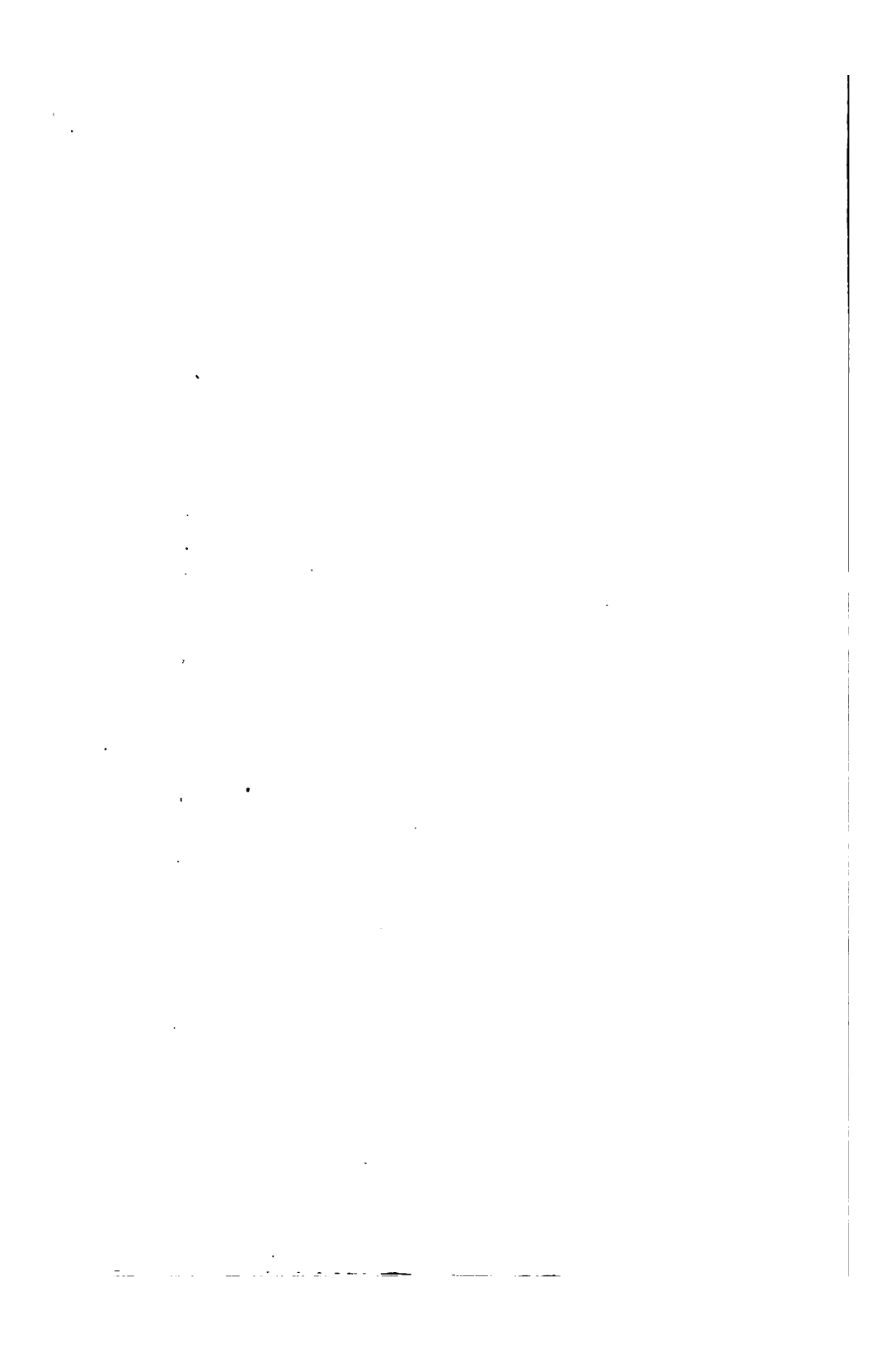
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## Contents

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	PAGE
FOREWORD . . . . .	5
THE CONGREGATIONAL INHERITANCE . . . . .	9
FELLOWSHIP IN ORGANIZATION . . . . .	13
FELLOWSHIP FOR WORK . . . . .	15
METHOD OF ORGANIZING A CHURCH . . . . .	20
SUGGESTION FOR CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS . . . . .	24
METHOD OF CALLING AND INSTALLING A MINISTER . . . . .	28
ADMISSION INTO UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP . . . . .	33
THE BUSINESS METHODS OF A CHURCH . . . . .	35
METHOD OF ORGANIZING A SUNDAY SCHOOL . . . . .	43
METHOD OF ORGANIZING A BRANCH ALLIANCE . . . . .	50
METHOD OF ORGANIZING A YOUNG PEOPLE'S UNION . . . . .	52
THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH . . . . .	56

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## Foreword

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**I**N January, 1886, a committee of the American Unitarian Association, consisting of John F. Moors, Grindall Reynolds, and Francis B. Hornbrooke, prepared and printed a pamphlet on "The Organization of Parishes and Churches." In the Annual Report of the Association in May, 1900, it was pointed out that this pamphlet was both out of date and out of print, and that there was a rational demand for a carefully prepared manual for the facilitating of the organization of new churches on the principles of our order, and for the guidance of ministers and parish committees in the conduct of the administrative affairs of our existing churches. In accordance with this suggestion, the Directors of the American Unitarian Association, at a meeting held June 12, 1900,

*Voted*, That the recommendation of the Secretary for the appointment of a committee to prepare a manual on methods of church organization is hereby indorsed, and the President is requested to appoint such a committee.

The following persons were accordingly appointed as this Committee,—John P. Forbes, Roland W. Boyden, George H. Badger, Clara B. Beatley, Florence Everett, with the President of the Association as Chairman.

The handbook prepared by this Committee is issued to promote an intelligent appreciation of the principles and methods which have been found helpful in the experience of our religious fellowship,

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## Foreword

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and in the hope that the suggestions offered may be helpful to those who are engaged in the work of organizing or administering our free churches. While the recommendations set forth in this handbook are primarily directed to the needs of new churches, it is hoped that the older churches will also find useful suggestions for the conduct of their work, and that by the more general adoption of the principles here set forth our methods of administration and our ways of ordering the worship of our churches may be harmonized and unified, and our churches brought into closer and more sympathetic fellowship.

The Committee does not assume that the adoption of its recommendations will create opportunities or powers. The endeavors of a working church are not mechanical, but inspirational. The Committee seeks simply to help churches to utilize the forces that are assumed to already exist in the purposes and hopes of ministers and people, to show our fellow-believers who long to advance the kingdom of God what they can do and how they can do it,—in a word, to point out some ways in which the latent power in the Unitarian movement can be organized and expressed. No mere machine methods are here proposed. The ways of working in our free churches must obviously be flexible, and must vary according to local needs and conditions; but the ways of working should never be loose and haphazard.

With one exception the methods of co-operative

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## Foreword

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life and service recommended by the Committee have been abundantly tested in the experience of our fellowship. They are in complete operation in a few existing churches and partially adopted by nearly all. They are in no sense experimental. Experience has proved that, other things being equal, the churches are strong and fruitful in proportion to the measure of their use of the channels of organized life which are described, not originated, in this handbook.

The one recommendation which has not yet been sufficiently tested by experience relates to the organization of the church. From the Congregational inheritance of our churches we have derived a complicated and ineffective plan of organization for our societies. The people of our older churches are gathered into several distinct bodies, each body making its own rules, choosing its own officers, managing its own operations, without adequate sense of common work and purpose, without unity of plan, and sometimes even without harmony. The parish is usually a purely business body, owning the real estate and managing the money matters. The church is usually a small and inactive body, and in many cases is practically extinct. The Committee believes that this traditional system, if it can be called a system, is discredited: it should never be reproduced in new churches, and, where it exists in old churches, it should be gradually modified until a simpler and more efficient form of organization can be substituted. A single inclusive organization of

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## Foreword

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all who are interested in the objects of the church, and who wish to co-operate with others to promote these objects, will truly express our free Congregational ideals, quicken the sense of unity, provide against friction and for adequate oversight of all departments of the church work, and give each member an equal privilege and duty in the church life. While, then, in most of the recommendations offered by the Committee, alternative methods or plans are suggested, in this primary matter, there is, in the judgment of the Committee, but one course of action which is just, wise, inclusive, and efficient.

The work of the Committee has been submitted to careful and repeated revision. A number of wise and experienced fellow-workers have offered their criticisms and suggestions, and now permit the handbook to be published with their general approval and recommendation to the churches for practical use. Among the friends who have thus aided the committee are Rev. Francis G. Peabody, D.D., of Harvard University; Rev. Edward A. Horton, President of the Unitarian Sunday-School Society; Rev. Daniel W. Morehouse, Secretary of the National Conference; Rev. Howard N. Brown, Chairman of the Council of the National Conference; Rev. F. C. Southworth, Secretary of the Western Conference; Rev. George Batchelor, editor of the *Christian Register*; Mrs. B. Ward Dix, President of the National Alliance; and Miss R. D. Homer, Secretary of the Young People's Religious Union.

S. A. E.

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## The Congregational Inheritance of Unitarian Churches

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A Congregational church is a church governed by its own congregation. In the administration of its affairs, both ecclesiastical and secular, it is independent of diocese, synod, or presbytery, and also of all other congregations. Whenever a number of people meet together without external dictation, and express a common religious purpose, adopt articles of fellowship and a statement of faith, that group constitutes of itself a Congregational church. It chooses its own officers, determines its own order of worship, and selects its own minister.

For the sake of a wider fellowship and a greater usefulness a number of Congregational churches may unite in Associations or Conferences. In this way the interests of a common cause are furthered through wise and effective co-operation. But such organizations have no power to control the action of any church in the administration of its own affairs.

The word "Congregational" stands, then, not for a statement of theological belief, but for a form of church government. There are Trinitarian and Unitarian Congregational churches, there are Baptist and Universalist Congregational churches. By a rule of custom, Trinitarian churches that have adopted both the Congregational form of government and the fundamental doctrines of Evangelical faith, are spoken of, in distinction from other relig-



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## The Congregational Inheritance

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ious bodies, as Congregational churches ; but they possess no exclusive right to the name.

The churches of the Unitarian order are strictly Congregational churches. They inherit not only the forward-looking spirit, but the traditions, habits, and, in many cases, the names, organization, and properties of the original Congregational churches. As the direct and legitimate heirs of the founders of the Congregational system, they, almost alone among Christian churches, hold to the democratic principle of self-government in its purity and integrity.

When the Pilgrims came to Plymouth in New England, and on the hill facing the sea laid the foundations, both civil and religious, of our republic, they established, at the very beginning of religious history in New England, the principle of government by the congregation. This principle was followed by the Puritans at Salem and Boston. The Pilgrim Covenant, formed at Scrooby in 1602, declares that these people, "as ye Lord's free people, joyned themselves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in ye fellowship of ye gospell, to walk in all his wayes, made known or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavors, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them."

The Covenant of the First Church in Salem, adopted in 1629, reads, "We covenant with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God to walk together in all His

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## The Congregational Inheritance

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ways, according as He is pleased to reveal Himself unto us in His Blessed Word of Truth."

The Covenant of the First Church in Boston, established in 1630, is as follows: "We, whose names are hereunder written, . . . do hereby solemnly and religiously (as in his most holy presence) promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rule of the gospel and in all sincere conformity to his holy ordinances, and in mutual love and respect each to other, so near as God shall give us grace."

These covenants are still retained by these three churches, though these churches, together with the majority of the Massachusetts churches founded in the seventeenth century, now acknowledge a Unitarian faith and fellowship. They became Unitarian through the natural and inevitable tendencies of their own free and progressive system of government.

Congregationalism is identified with all the great features of our National life. It has stimulated independent thought, actively promoted civil liberty and the practice of self-government. The spirit that led to the establishment of churches governed by the congregation led to the establishment of the New England town meeting, and finally to the democratic system of National government under which we live. A democratic church in a free state, which tolerates all other forms of religious faith and polity, relies for its wise conduct and permanent development upon the sound and widespread education of the people, and particularly

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## The Congregational Inheritance

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upon a highly trained ministry. By the inevitable tendencies of its fundamental principles, Congregationalism has therefore contributed more than any other polity to the growth of toleration in religion and to the upbuilding of popular education. The great common school system we enjoy is largely a product of the spirit of New England Congregationalism; and Congregationalists have been foremost in America in founding colleges, universities, and seats of learning.

Congregationalism gives free play to the infinite diversity of human faculty and aspiration, and thus upbuilds the true unity of the spirit in place of sectarian rivalry or barren uniformity. The purpose and result of Congregationalism has been summed up in the saying that it "helps to educate men and women, for righteousness, through freedom, to unity."

It is, then, a noble heritage of independence, made effective for human welfare by co-operation and fellowship, into which the churches of the Unitarian order are permitted to enter. By this heritage Trinitarian Congregationalists and Unitarian Congregationalists alike are enriched. The Unitarian churches represent to-day the purity and completeness of the Scriptural and historic principles of church government which are the source of "a freedom that is religious and a religion that is free." To be faithful stewards of this trust, to transmit it augmented and enriched to their successors, is their great privilege and plain duty.

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## Fellowship in Organization

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The free and independent churches of the Unitarian fellowship agree to walk together in certain Councils and Conferences for the quickening of their religious life, for the promotion of mutual good will, for consultation in regard to matters of common interest, and for the discovery and adoption of more efficient means of usefulness. The churches thus co-operating have no power to control the action of any particular church. Their association is purely voluntary, and does not comprehend the assumption or exercise of any authority.

1. These *Conferences* are various in their organization and in the extent of their activity. Nineteen Conferences, chiefly in Massachusetts, are organized, for the most part, on *county* lines, and are known as *Local* Conferences. Eight are *State* Conferences; and nine, which cover larger territories than a single State, are known as *District* Conferences. Most of the District and State Conferences and a few of the Local Conferences are incorporated, and hold and administer some funds; but, as a rule, the Conferences exist to promote acquaintance and co-operation rather than for the conduct of active missionary work. All the Conferences hold annual meetings, and many of them hold semi-annual or quarterly meetings. Every Unitarian church is expected to identify itself with the life and work of the Local, State, or District Conference within whose territory it is situated.

2. *The National Conference*, organized at a special

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## Fellowship in Organization

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meeting of the American Unitarian Association in 1864, meets biennially at a time and place appointed by the governing Council, and consists of three delegates from each Unitarian church or affiliated organization. The Conference is a deliberative body, formed "with the purpose of strengthening the churches and societies united in it for more and better work for the kingdom of God." It is not incorporated, and on the administrative side it confines itself to recommending to the American Unitarian Association and the other incorporated and working organizations of the Unitarian body "such undertakings and methods as it judges to be in the heart of its constituency." The admission to the Unitarian ministry of ministers from other communions (see page 33) is in charge of the Fellowship Committee of the National Conference.

The Constitution and By-laws of the Conference, as well as lists of officers, Council, etc., will be found in the Unitarian Year Book. The Year Book should also be consulted for detailed description of the Local, State, and District Conferences.

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## Fellowship for Work

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1. *The American Unitarian Association*, organized in 1825, incorporated in 1847, is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches. Its objects are to collect and diffuse information respecting the state of Unitarian Christianity, to produce union, sympathy, and co-operation among liberal Christians, to publish and distribute books and tracts, and to spread the principles of thought and conduct which Unitarians believe to be essential to the maintenance and progress of civil and religious liberty. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and sustains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, and publishes and sells or gives away books, tracts, and devotional works.

The Association is a representative body, and is national in spirit and government. The annual meeting is held in May; and any church or missionary organization of two years' standing, having made two successive annual contributions to the funds of the Association before May first of any year, is entitled to representation by its minister and two other delegates. The president, vice-presidents, secretaries, and treasurer are annually elected; and these officers, together with eighteen other persons, representing all parts of the country, elected for terms of three years, constitute the Board of Directors. Of this Board sixteen must be laymen and three must be women.

The National Headquarters are at the Association's

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## Fellowship for Work

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building, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, and local offices are maintained in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. The Association at the National Headquarters furnishes office-room without rent to the other denominational organizations.

The Association is the publication agency for the denomination. Catalogues of its own publication of both books and tracts will be sent on application. A list of the books and tracts illustrating Unitarian principles and history will also be sent, or it can be found in the Year Book.

More than one-half of all the existing Unitarian churches in America owe their being to the work of the Association, and nearly all Unitarian churches have at one time or another known the fostering care of the National Association.

The work of the Association is chiefly supported by voluntary contributions of the churches and individuals interested in the cause it represents, while its office expenses are met from the income of its invested funds. The serviceableness of the Association is thus dependent upon the interest, zeal, and generosity of the churches and individuals who compose its membership; and it has no power beyond that which is derived from the support and co-operation of Unitarian ministers and people.

All information about the work and needs of the Association can be obtained by applying to the Secretary, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston. The list of officers and directors, etc., can be found in the Year Book.

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## Fellowship for Work

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2. *The Unitarian Sunday-School Society*, organized in 1827, aids Unitarian churches in "promoting moral and religious education." It publishes manuals for Sunday Schools, provides hymn-books and special services, issues the paper for the young people of the denomination, sustains courses of instruction and lectures, maintains a book department; and its officers respond to calls for addresses and consultation. Membership consists of three delegates from each Unitarian parish or Sunday School sending an annual contribution to the treasury of the Society and of the life members who have at one time contributed \$10. The headquarters of the Sunday-School Society is in Room 7 of the building of the American Unitarian Association, and the book-room of the Society will be found in the same building. Descriptions and catalogue of the Society's publication will be sent to any address. For full information, see the annual reports of the Society and the Unitarian Year Book, wherein will be found also described the Western Sunday-School Society and the various Sunday-School Unions for local work. For the method of organizing a Sunday School, see page 43.

3. *The National Alliance* of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women is the organization of the women of the Unitarian churches, formed on its present basis in 1890. The objects of the Alliance are: to quicken the religious life of Unitarian churches, and to bring the women of the denomination into closer acquaintance, co-operation, and fel-



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## Fellowship for Work

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lowship; to promote local organizations of women for missionary and denominational work, and to bring the same into association; to collect and disseminate information regarding all matters of interest to the denomination, and to devise ways and means for more efficient usefulness. A branch is an organization of women in a Unitarian church, formed for the religious and other purposes contemplated by the Alliance, or an organization formed by Unitarian women for the same purposes, but not connected with any church. An associate branch is a union of two or more branches for more effective work. The local branches retain their independence in local work, but make contributions to the National treasury. Such money as may be contributed unappropriated to the National treasury, over and above the one-third membership fee, is expended for such work as is in harmony with the other National Unitarian organizations. For complete information in regard to the Alliance, its organization and work, see the Unitarian Year Book and the Manual of the Alliance, annually published. The headquarters of the Alliance is in Room 6 in the building of the American Unitarian Association, Boston, Mass. For method of forming a Branch Alliance, see page 50.

4. *Young People's Religious Union*, organized in 1896, is the National society of the young people of the churches. Its objects are to foster religious life, to bring young people of Unitarian churches into closer relations, and to put into practice such

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## Fellowship for Work

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principles of life and duty as tend to uplift mankind. The National Headquarters are at Room 11 of the building of the American Unitarian Association. For full information, see the Year Book; and, for recommendation on the organization of a local Young People's Religious Union, see page 52.

5. All other denominational organizations, ministerial associations, Unitarian clubs, benevolent societies, and educational organizations will be found described at length in the Year Book. The Year Book should be at hand for reference by all Unitarian ministers and parish officers:

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## The Method of Organizing a Unitarian Church

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1. When it shall become evident, after a reasonable canvass of the situation, that the time is auspicious for the organization of a Unitarian church in any community, a letter of invitation may be issued, signed by several competent people (perhaps five or six), whose names shall be a warrant for the serious and substantial character of the new movement, addressed to all persons who may be assumed to be interested in the proposed organization. In some cases the invitation may be a public one, extended to all who may desire to co-operate; but usually it is wiser to assemble at the first meeting only such as are already known to be seriously enlisted. It is wise, also, to invite the Field Secretary of the American Unitarian Association or Superintendent of the department in which the new church is situated, or the Secretary of the State or Local Conference, to be present, and assist by his council and advice. The following form of invitation is suggested:—

You are cordially invited to attend a meeting to be held [*time and place*] for the purpose of organizing a Unitarian church in this community, in case it shall appear expedient, after due deliberation, to take this action.

2. At the appointed time for the meeting, one of the signers of the invitation, or some person selected by the signers, may call those assembled to order,

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## Organizing a Church

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read the formal letter of invitation, and ask for the nomination of a moderator, who shall be elected by acclamation. The meeting shall further organize by the election of a temporary clerk.

3. The moderator shall then call upon some proper person to state clearly and explicitly the circumstances which make it appear expedient to organize the church, after which a formal motion for organization shall be presented. The following is suggested as a form for this motion: —

*Voted*, That we proceed immediately to the organization of a Unitarian Church to be known as ———.

4. If, after full discussion, the vote of organization shall be passed, the adoption of a Covenant or Bond of Fellowship shall be in order. The form indorsed by the National Conference, and in use in many Unitarian churches, is as follows: "In the love of truth and the spirit of Jesus Christ we unite for the worship of God and the service of man." For other suggested forms see the Report of the Committee on Covenants published by the American Unitarian Association.

5. After the adoption of a Covenant, a consideration of a Constitution and By-laws shall be in order; or, if preferred, the appointment of a committee to prepare and report such code and Constitution at a later meeting.

A suggested form for Constitution and By-laws will be found on page 24.

6. The actual membership of a new church con-

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## Organizing a Church

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sists of those who sign the Covenant or Bond of Fellowship, and are regularly enrolled according to the procedure laid down in the Constitution and By-laws. In regular order the signers of the invitation to the meeting of organization, and those invited to attend, whether present or not, from that fact have immediate right of enrolment; while other members are added in accordance with such qualifications as may be required by the Constitution. It is not in the tradition of our churches that any theological tests or confession of faith or spiritual experience shall be made a requisite of membership in any Unitarian church; but it may wisely be provided that a proper committee first assure itself of the moral probity and serious intention of all persons applying for membership before they are received into full enrolment.

7. Upon the final adoption of a Constitution and By-laws and the actual enrolment of members, the church shall immediately organize itself by the election of permanent officers and committees, and shall assume the orderly functions of a religious body. It is a fitting act of courtesy that its clerk shall forthwith communicate with the Superintendent or Field Secretary for the department in whose territory the church is situated, the Secretary of the nearest Local or State Conference, and the ministers of the Unitarian churches in the nearest neighborhood, informing them of the organization of the new church or society.

8. A new church becomes enrolled in the Year

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## Organizing a Church

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Book and recognized as in full fellowship with the Unitarian body on the approval of the Board of Directors of the American Unitarian Association. An application for such approval should be made through the Secretary of the Association. Any church so approved is readily received into the fellowship of the State or Local Conference to which it may naturally belong upon application made through its Secretary. Every church enrolled in the Year Book is entitled to representation by pastor and delegates at the biennial meetings of the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches; and every church which has made a contribution to the funds of the American Unitarian Association for two succeeding years is entitled to representation by pastor and delegates at the annual meeting of that Association which is held in Boston in May.

9. It is necessary for every church which proposes to hold property, and greatly to be desired for every church, that it become legally incorporated. As each State has its different laws of incorporation, no rule of procedure can here be laid down, the advice and service of a competent attorney being necessary.

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## Suggestion for a Constitution and By-laws for a Unitarian Church

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The following forms of Constitution and By-laws are presented simply as a suggestion to newly organizing churches and societies, being compiled from the constitutions of several of our newer churches :—

### ARTICLE I.

The name of this church shall be

### ARTICLE II.

#### *Object.*

The object of this church is set forth in its covenant : "In the love of truth and the spirit of Jesus Christ we unite for the worship of God and the service of man."

#### *Alternate Statements of Purpose.*

1. The object of this church shall be to maintain regular services of Christian worship in this community, and to upbuild in the hearts of its people the high ideals of a rational, progressive, and exalting religion, in the love of God and the service of man.

2. The object of this church shall be united thought and action in the study and practice of Christianity.

### ARTICLE III.

#### *Membership.*

Any person in sympathy with the purposes and methods of this church, who shall be approved by the Board of Trustees as of moral seriousness and probity of character, may become a member of this church by signing the Bond of Fellowship (or such covenant of faith and right endeavor as may be established as its basis of working fellowship) ; but the right to vote at business meetings of the church shall be reserved for members who have attained the

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## Constitution and By-laws

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age of twenty years and are regular contributors to the maintenance of worship.

### ARTICLE IV.

#### *Officers.*

The officers of this church shall be a President, a Clerk, a Treasurer, and ——— Trustees, who shall all together constitute a Board of Trustees. These officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of each year, and shall continue in office until their successors are chosen. The Board of Trustees shall fill all vacancies occurring in these offices.

#### *Alternate Statements. Officers.*

1. At the annual meeting of the church there shall be elected a Clerk, a Treasurer, and a standing committee consisting of ——— members, all of whom shall hold office until their successors are chosen.

2. The Board of Trustees shall consist of nine members of the church, chosen for terms of three years. Three Trustees shall be chosen at each annual meeting. The Trustees shall choose from their number a President, a Clerk, and a Treasurer.

### ARTICLE V.

#### *Meetings.*

The annual meeting of the church shall be held ——— for the electing of officers and transacting of all other proper business. Stated meetings shall be held ———. Special meetings may be called at the order of the President or Board of Trustees for such purposes only as may be specified in the call of the meeting. Ten days' notice shall be given for every such meeting.

### ARTICLE VI.

#### *Amendments and By-laws.*

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any legal meeting of the church, provided the proposed change or amend-



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## Constitution and By-laws

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ment shall have been fully set forth in the call for such meeting, a two-thirds vote of the members present being necessary to the adoption of such amendment.

By-laws not conflicting with the provisions of this Constitution or with the State laws may be added or changed at any time by a majority vote.

### BY-LAWS.

1. It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the church and of the Board of Trustees.

2. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to keep record of all meetings of the church and of the Board of Trustees, to keep a correct roll of its members, to hold in custody all papers and documents belonging to the church, and to perform such other duties as may naturally devolve upon his office.

3. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to hold in custody all funds of the church, to keep an account of all receipts and expenditures, to pay such bills as may be approved by the Board of Trustees, and to render at the annual meeting and at such other meetings as may be required a financial statement of the church.

4. The Board of Trustees shall have general charge of the conduct of all business affairs of the church and the control of its administration, but no contract involving any expenditure of money exceeding ——— shall be made without a vote of the church.

5. The Minister of this church shall be chosen, and his salary determined, by vote of the church at a regularly called meeting; and a vote of the church shall be necessary for his dismissal.

6. The standing committees of this church shall be ———.\* These committees shall be chosen by the Board of Trustees at its first meeting after the annual meeting of each year, in such manner as the Board of Trustees shall decide. Special committees may be appointed at any time.

7. The Minister of the church, the President, the Superintendent

\* Among such committees are usually: (a) Finance; (b) Charitable and Missionary Collections; (c) Hospitality; (d) Music; (e) Church Decoration; (f) Care of Building.

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## Constitution and By-laws

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of the Sunday School, the President of the Women's Branch Alliance, and the President of the Young People's Religious Union shall constitute a Committee of Conference, who shall meet at such regular times as it shall itself fix, to consider the general welfare of the church, and make such recommendations to the Board of Trustees or any standing committee as shall seem conducive to the general good.

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## Method of Calling and Installing a Minister

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1. *The Call*.—When a new church becomes ready to settle a minister or when a vacancy occurs in the pastorate of any church, it is customary, at a meeting of the society held as early as possible, to appoint a committee to take in charge the supply of the pulpit and the recommendation of a candidate or candidates, to be considered at a later meeting of the parish.

2. The experience of many churches has proved it to be wise that, as soon as possible, with the advice of the Field Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, the Secretary of the Local Conference, or other competent leader in denominational affairs, a very short list of desirable candidates (not more than four) be carefully selected from all names recommended in any way, and that the men in this list be given each at least two hearings before the congregation; after which the Committee on Pulpit Supply shall, if possible, unite upon and recommend a single candidate, and present his name to a meeting of the church. This nomination should be acted upon before any other names are considered. All useless and undignified discussion should be avoided. No church should admit to its pulpit, even for a single service, a candidate who cannot bring clear, ample, and recent credentials of good ministerial standing. It is the duty of church officers and committees to

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## Calling and Installing a Minister

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protect the pulpit against clerical adventurers and vagrants. Carelessness in the discharge of this grave responsibility has too often resulted in disaster.

3. If at the meeting of the church, on an informal ballot, it shall appear that a general unanimity of choice can be reached, a formal motion is presented and voted upon, substantially as follows:—

*Voted*, That the Rev. ——— be invited to become minister of this church with salary of ———, and that the Clerk (or Secretary) be instructed to communicate this invitation to him.

4. On the acceptance of this invitation by the pastor-elect the pastorate may begin at such time and under such conditions as may be arranged by him and the proper committee of the society.

*Ordination*.—1. It is the established custom of our churches that a minister shall be inducted into the active pursuance of his high calling by a formal public service of ordination. According to the long tradition of Congregational churches, a man is not properly a candidate for ordination until he has received and accepted a call to the pastorate of some church or has been commissioned by some competent body to undertake missionary or other ministerial work.

A. THE COUNCIL.—1. The service of ordination is conducted under the auspices of some church or Conference or other competent body; and by

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## Calling and Installing a Minister

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long established (though not invariable) custom a Council of churches is invited to assist, by its approval, in the conduct of the service.

2. To this Council are invited by a letter missive (1) all Unitarian churches which may naturally be considered as neighboring churches; (2) all churches whose pastors are invited to take part in the services; (3) and such other churches or individual ministers as may, by courtesy, because of peculiar relationship to the pastor-elect or the society inviting, be expected to attend. The usual form of letter missive is as follows:—

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN ——— TO THE ———  
CHURCH IN ———

*Greeting:*

The ——— parish in ———, having called the Rev. ——— to be its minister, and he having accepted the invitation, the evening of ——— has been appointed for his ordination. We cordially invite you to be present by minister and delegate.

The Council will meet at ———. Public services will begin at ———.

For the Church,

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Committee.*

3. The meeting of the Council is called to order at the appointed time by the Chairman of the Parish Committee of the inviting church, who shall request the nomination and election of a Moderator. After a brief prayer by the Moderator, a scribe is chosen, who shall call the roll of the Coun-

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## Calling and Installing a Minister

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cil as prepared by the Clerk of the parish inviting the Council. The Clerk of the parish may then read the record of the meeting at which the action calling the pastor-elect was taken, the letter to the pastor-elect containing this call, and his letter of acceptance, after which the candidate for ordination may be invited to make such statement as shall seem to him fitting regarding his education and professional equipment and his purpose of work and spirit of service. Then may be presented the formal motion for proceeding to the service of ordination, which may in substance be as follows :—

*Voted,* That this Council approves the action of the ——— Church in calling the Rev. ——— to be its minister, and hereby appoints the Rev. ——— to extend the right hand of fellowship at the service of ordination.

4. After the passing of this vote, the Council shall be dissolved. The Moderator of the Council may introduce the public service of ordination by an announcement of this action on the part of the Council.

**B. PUBLIC SERVICE.**— The parts usually assigned in an ordination service are: (1) Invocation; (2) Reading of Scripture; (3) Sermon; (4) Prayer of Ordination; (5) Charge to the Minister; (6) Right Hand of Fellowship; (7) Charge to the People.

2. These parts are assigned by mutual arrangement between the committee acting for the church and the pastor-elect. The prayer of ordination and

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## Calling and Installing a Minister

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the charge to the minister, naturally, are given more directly according to the personal desire of the minister, the charge to the people according to the desire of the church.

3. The service of ordination has its natural focus of significance in the prayer of ordination, and this should therefore be assigned always to a minister whose standing in the Unitarian fellowship and dignity of personal character befit the responsibility of the ordaining function. The right hand of fellowship is in ordination extended in behalf of the Christian ministry and the Unitarian fellowship; and the minister extending it should be, therefore, himself in full fellowship and in active work of the ministry, and his words should be of simple welcome and congratulation. The benediction is pronounced by the new minister.

4. The service of installation is similar to that of ordination, though with a shaded distinction of significance. In many churches a Council is not invited to assist at installation, but all neighboring Unitarian churches and others naturally interested should be invited to attend. The right hand of fellowship has a more local significance in a service of installation, and should be assigned to one who shall immediately represent the Local Conference or the neighborhood into which the minister is welcomed.

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## Admission into the Unitarian Fellowship

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1. When an organized *church* heretofore independent or in fellowship with another Christian body desires to enter the Unitarian fellowship, a formal vote or resolution may be adopted at a special meeting of the parish, declaring the desire of the members. This vote may read as follows:—

“Whereas the [*name of church*] of ——— finds itself in faith and practice in sympathy with the purposes and aims of the Unitarian churches of America,

*Resolved*, That the Trustees (or Parish Committee) be instructed in the name of the church to send fraternal greetings to the American Unitarian Association, and request that the name of the church be duly enrolled upon the list of free and independent churches which acknowledge the Unitarian name, faith, and fellowship.

Upon the approval of the Directors of the Association the name of the church may be duly enrolled upon the list of churches in the Year Book, and notice sent by the Secretary of the Association to the Secretary of the National Conference, and the State or Local Conference in which the church is situated, and the church may enter into the fellowship of organization and work as described on pages 13 and 15. If preferable, the church may first seek the fellowship of the Local, State, or District Conference, and be by such conference commended to the National Conference.

2. When a *minister* in fellowship with some other religious body wishes recognition as a Unitarian



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## Admission into the Unitarian Fellowship

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minister, application should be made to the nearest member of the Fellowship Committee of the National Conference. This committee, acting under the authority of instructions embodied in votes passed by the Conference and by the American Unitarian Association, has jurisdiction over the authorized list of Unitarian ministers published in the Year Book.

In deciding upon the fitness of a candidate for admission to the Unitarian fellowship, the Committee will be guided above all by such proofs of the moral earnestness and integrity of the applicant as may be discovered after a careful investigation. It may also take into account the amount and kind of preparation that has been made for the work of the ministry, and may advise with the candidate as to any further course of study that he may seem to require. In all cases, however, the Committee may, at its discretion, refuse to put the name of a candidate upon the list before he has been regularly settled over a Unitarian church. This Committee also has power to cause the name of any person to be removed from the list, when it is satisfied that in conduct or character said person has become unworthy to hold the office of a Christian minister in the Unitarian fellowship.

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## The Business Methods of a Unitarian Church

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The business of a church should be conducted with exceptional care and scrupulous accuracy. All the engagements of a parish should be undertaken and carried out as sacred trusts, with all the exactness, fairness, and fidelity that can be expected in the acts of any trustees.

The church should appoint to administer its business affairs only men and women who appreciate the responsibility, who know how to transact business in a way which will not cause friction and misunderstanding, and who will not allow personal interests to blind them to the good of all.

1. *Incorporation*.—Every Unitarian church should be incorporated under the laws of the State in which it is situated, and qualified to hold property. The statutes of the State which relate to the mode of calling and conducting the meetings of a religious society and certifying and recording the results should always be carefully studied and complied with. The statutes differ in the States of the Union, and no general recommendations can be made here.

2. *Membership*.—For the peace and security of the church, membership should be clearly defined. The rights of those who are entitled to vote should be made clear beyond mistake; and this should be done by careful attention to the law where it declares the right, and, if it does not, by framing con-

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## Business Methods of a Church

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stitutional rules and proper by-laws and settling in advance just what the conditions of membership are. Constant attention should be paid to maintaining an accurate record of existing membership. It is recommended that the qualifications of a voter in a Unitarian church be :—

1. Acceptance of the Covenant or Bond of Fellowship of the church.

2. Stated attendance on the worship of the church for at least one year.

3. A contribution to the support of worship according to the usages and customs of the church.

3. *Records*.—Every corporate or legal act of the church should appear in its own *record book*. This should be separate from the record book of the Board of Trustees or Standing Committee. The clerk or secretary is a very important officer, and should be held to the strict and scrupulous discharge of his duty. In more than one case the whole property of a church has been imperilled by a careless keeping of its corporate records. In addition to these records the minister should keep the parish register, recording the admission to membership in the church, deaths, dismissals, and removals, and baptisms, marriages, and funerals.

4. *Annual Meeting*.—The annual meeting of the church should be an important occasion, and attendance at it should be a part of the duty of every member. There should be reports from all the activities and benevolences of the church ; and the proper officers, committees, and delegates should be elected or appointed.

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## Business Methods of a Church

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5. *Church Property*.—The care and control of the *church building* is vested in the corporation; and the Trustees or Standing Committee represent the corporation in determining the necessity or propriety of the various uses to which the building may be put. Neither the minister nor individual members of the congregation have any right to give or rent the church building for any purpose, however laudable, without the assent of the Trustees. It is desirable that even special services should not be announced without the concurrence of the Trustees, because the Trustees are primarily responsible for the safe-keeping of the property. On the other hand, the Trustees have no right to use the building for other purposes than those which naturally belong to a religious society without the assent of the church. The building is sacred to religious uses and the business necessarily attendant on religious uses. As a rule, it is found expedient to reserve the church building proper for religious associations only, but lectures or concerts of a kind sanctioned by the uses of the denomination or the community may properly be conducted in it with the tacit assent of the society. It is customary to give the organist the right to control the use of the organ.

6. *Finances*.—Entire *publicity* of the financial condition of a church is thoroughly wholesome. There should never be any secrecy or silence about income and expenses. The treasurer's statement should be presented in full at each annual meeting,

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## Business Methods of a Church

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carefully audited, and, when feasible, printed for distribution to the congregation. The congregation is entitled to know all the details of the church expenses, with the exception of personal charitable aid; and it will always be found that publicity leads to interest, and interest to co-operation and generosity. As a rule, the minister should be paid regularly on the first of every month, and the choir and sexton at the same time. If a debt is incurred, it should not be permitted to become chronic. If it cannot be extinguished at once, it should be put in the way of gradual extinction. The discouragement of a debt is not in its existence, but in its increase. If the current is flowing in the right direction, relief is only a question of time. The existence of a debt should never be made an excuse for refraining from the usual charities of a religious organization. It is sometimes urged that a church ought not to give to others until it has provided for its own debts and expenses. This course has not, however, approved itself in the experience of our churches. A church that ceases to give ceases to have. To suspend outside benevolence until a debt is paid is to turn away the chief element of strength and progress. The people who give toward the extinction of the debt probably do so because the church is active, benevolent, and willing to be serviceable in missionary and charitable causes.

7. *Parish Ways and Means.*—The methods of raising money for the necessary expenses of main-

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## Business Methods of a Church

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taining a useful church vary according to the customs or conditions of different communities. The majority of Unitarian churches depend upon annual voluntary subscriptions. The pews are free; and the expenses are met by the pledges of the members, payable usually through the so-called envelope system, either weekly or monthly. A large minority of Unitarian churches are supported by the renting of pews. A small number of the older churches retain the historic proprietary system, where pews are owned by individuals, who pay taxes or assessments on their property for the support of worship. In some cases, two of these methods are employed in the same parish, as where some pews are owned and others rented, or where some pews are rented and the remainder of the income raised by subscription.

In regard to these different methods it is recommended:—

a. That every church should own and control its own property. The private ownership of pews is foreign to the true spirit of a Christian church and to the democratic principles of the Congregational order. No new church should now be organized upon the proprietary system; and, where that system has been inherited, it should be discontinued as rapidly as circumstances permit. In such cases the church should gradually by gift or purchase acquire the rights of the private owners until all such rights are extinguished, and the title to the entire church property, together with the administration of the affairs

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## Business Methods of a Church

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of the society, vested not in the proprietors, but in the church as a whole.

*b.* The system of raising money by the renting of pews and sittings is often found to be the safest and easiest method of collecting the revenue, but it sometimes places the poorer members of the church at a disadvantage. In actual working, this method has often proved itself the most efficient; but it is not ideal, as it introduces an undesirable mercantile or competitive spirit, and in a measure begets a subtle spirit of division or exclusiveness.

*c.* The voluntary system is democratic, consistent, and in accord with the principle of Christian brotherhood. When it is efficiently used, it is the best method; but it is dependent for its success upon the industry and fidelity of the collector or treasurer, who raises the subscriptions and keeps the accounts. Where it is well administered, this system works admirably; but too often it has become, through careless and inefficient management, the cause of large and disastrous deficiencies.

Any system of parish finances rests at the bottom upon the forethought, energy, and promptness of those who adopt and administer it. Each system counts its successes and its failures. There is no system so good that it cannot be wrecked by bad management. There is no system so bad that it cannot be made to work well in the hands of wise and faithful administrators.

8. *Charitable and Missionary Contributions.*—Experience has abundantly proved that, in raising

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## Business Methods of a Church

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money for the charitable and missionary work of the church, the method of simply taking a collection at a church service is entirely inadequate. There are three methods that are thorough: one of which is always available.

*a.* The officers, or possibly the minister of the church, may issue by mail a printed statement of the purpose for which money is asked, incorporating a specific appeal for generous gifts for that end. In this appeal there may be enclosed envelopes upon which shall be printed the objects for which a contribution is requested, and a date upon which the envelope may be placed in the collection box at church. In connection with this method a collection may be announced for the day specified on the envelopes, so that people who do not wish to place anything in the envelope may be at liberty to contribute cash in the collection box. It should also be specified in this letter of appeal that, in case the giver cannot be present on the Sunday of the collection, his contribution can be mailed to the treasurer of the church.

*b.* The church may have a regular committee on collections, which shall consist of one person in a small parish, of several persons in larger parishes. The committee ought to be of such a size that its work can be accomplished within one week; and the duty of this committee should be to visit all interested persons, and lay before them a careful explanation of the object for which their subscription is being asked. With this method also a special col-



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## Business Methods of a Church

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lection may be used, the collectors themselves being supplied with special envelopes which they can leave with the people who will accept them.

c. At the beginning of the financial year the officers of the church may issue a card calling for subscriptions for the year for all of the regular objects to which the church contributes. For example, there may be specified upon this card the American Unitarian Association, the Unitarian Sunday-School Society, Local Charities, the Sunday School, etc. Under this plan the contributions for general objects can be paid at the convenience of the subscriber in the same manner in which he pays toward the support of the local church.

The second of these two methods has by experience been shown to be best in the smaller cities and towns, but less advantageous in the large cities, where congregations are very widely scattered in their residences. All three of these methods have been proved by the experience of many churches to be efficient in securing generous contributions for charitable and denominational enterprises. Nearly all of our people are able to give away certain sums of money in addition to what they give to their own churches. Very rarely is it the case that any individual gives so munificently to his local church that he cannot afford to contribute to the larger cause for which the Church stands. The people are able to give and glad to give to whatever cause they believe in; and the vitality of our charitable and missionary work depends chiefly upon good methods and hearty co-operation.

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## Method of Organizing a Sunday School

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1. *The Committee on the Sunday School.*—A Superintendent of the Sunday School should be elected by the church, and should in turn select the teachers, and appoint as officers a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Librarian. These persons together form a committee, the Superintendent acting as Chairman. The minister, if not serving as Superintendent, should be a member *ex officio*. The committee should hold regular meetings for the consideration of all business pertaining to the Sunday School, the Secretary and the Treasurer rendering reports at each meeting.

2. *The Call.*—The committee having organized and made plans for the opening of the school, a notice must be given from the pulpit, stating the date of beginning, and extending an invitation to parents and to all others interested in the school to co-operate with the committee in securing the attendance of pupils. A printed notice, setting forth the aims and prospective advantages of the school, should be sent by the Secretary to each family represented in the church and to other families that may be interested.

3. *Departments.*—The teachers are to be assigned by the Superintendent, according to aptitude, to Primary, Intermediate, and Advanced Departments, the pupils being grouped according to their development. The boys and girls should be taught

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## Organizing a Sunday School

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together in the Primary Department, and as far as possible in the Intermediate, where the practical working of the plan is more difficult. If separated in this department, they ought to be reunited in the Advanced.

Another arrangement, in some respects still better, is a division of pupils into four grades: Primary, Junior, Senior, and Advanced. The youngest in the Primary, those between eight and fourteen years in the Junior, those between fourteen and eighteen in the Senior, and all over eighteen in the Advanced department.

4. *Lesson Systems*.\*—Three systems are in use in Unitarian Sunday Schools, each having some peculiar merits. The wise choice can be determined only by local conditions.

1. Independent lessons, adapted to the needs of individual classes.

2. The One-topic System, which subordinates special needs to the good of all, provides for a general lesson each Sunday, and insures a profitable round of discussion at teachers' meetings.

3. The Graded System, which provides a regular course of study adapted to the development of the growing mind, to be pursued during a series of years.

5. *Promotion*.—FIRST METHOD.—Each year a

\* Text-books, courses of lessons, and a large and varied amount of Sunday-School supplies may be obtained at the rooms of the Unitarian Sunday-School Society, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Consultation with the President of the Society, who has in his possession accumulated experience of the practical working of many Sunday Schools, will prove an advantage to beginners in the Sunday-School work.

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## Organizing a Sunday School

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class should be promoted from the Primary Department to the lowest grade of the Intermediate, and provided with a teacher who is to continue with the class through all the grades of the Intermediate, and, in cases of marked efficiency, through the Advanced Department. Those teachers who do not continue with classes through the advanced period may repeat with a new class the work of the Intermediate Department. Specially trained teachers are usually needed for the Advanced work. This method of promotion is the one in general use in Unitarian Sunday Schools. It is to be commended for the opportunity it affords for the continued influence of loved and trusted teachers.

The older Advanced classes may join in a Bible Class, led by the minister. They could form the strong nucleus of the branch of the Young People's Union or they might become a co-operative force with the Committee on the Sunday School in forwarding the many interests of the school.

**SECOND METHOD.**—A permanent teacher may be provided for each year's grade, the pupils being promoted from class to class, according to day-school method. This mode of promotion gives the pupils the advantages of specialized work and of personal contact with all the different teachers. With able and well-equipped teachers in the Advanced classes the same desirable results can be secured as with the one-teacher method.

6. *Financial Support.*—The Committee on the

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## Organizing a Sunday School

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Sunday School should estimate the annual cost of the school, which includes expenses for furnishings, for text-books and library, for social occasions, and for such paid service as is necessary for the success of the school, and acquaint the Finance Committee or Trustees of the church of its need. The money should be appropriated by the Trustees or Finance Committee, and paid to the Treasurer of the Committee on the Sunday School, who keeps a careful record of the receipts and expenses, and reports monthly to the committee and yearly to the church. Money for Sunday-School expenses should be appropriated by the Committee on the Sunday School.

In cases where church support is impracticable, the Sunday School may assume the responsibility of its own support, raising through weekly contributions and occasional entertainments the money to provide for the necessary running expenses and for whatever activities outside of itself in which it may choose to engage.

7. *The Conduct of the School.*—1. OPENING EXERCISES.—A strong central influence can be secured through an inspiring order of worship. The school bond must be strong to keep the pupils in regular attendance during the inevitable changes of class work. The school, led by the Superintendent, should unite in an opening service,\* the pupils being seated with their teachers according to classes, the younger pupils in front. The service

\* A Sunday-School Service Book is published by the Sunday-School Society, which has an extensive use.

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## Organizing a Sunday School

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may consist of passages of Scripture, responsive readings, prayer, and hymns, and some definite statement of faith and bond of union.

2. **THE CLASSES.**— Each class should be provided with tables and chairs, the height varying according to the needs of the pupils. Classes may be separated by screens where close contact of classes is otherwise unavoidable. The teacher records in a class-book the attendance at school and at church, and notes the total contribution of the class. The lesson then follows without further interruption.

3. **THE CLOSING SERVICE.**— This should be a brief service, from memory if practicable. It must be wisely chosen, to give the crowning impression of the hour. The benediction should be followed by the distribution of lesson papers, library books, and other supplies, which the Secretary and the Librarian have systematically arranged during the class period. The classes remain seated while the teachers deliver the supplies. An orderly dismissal is thus insured.

8. **Practical Work.**— Classes should be encouraged to bring money contributions each Sunday to provide for some practical work in harmony with the spirit of the church. The whole school may unite in the support of some Unitarian or unsectarian charity, or each class can have its own class treasury, with its own special object of interest. One Sunday each year may be given to reports of

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## Organizing a Sunday School

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this work, and the congregation invited to join the Sunday School on that day, and become acquainted with its working methods.

9. *Denominational Instruction.*—Interest may be stimulated in the denominational life by acquainting the Sunday School at definite times with the work of the National organizations, and particularly of the American Unitarian Association, Sunday School Society, and Young People's Religious Union. These organizations have a common centre, and bear an intimate relation. The members of the Sunday School need to be led into a knowledge of the aims, methods, and value of these denominational forces. The annual observance of Association Day may be made an effective means to this end.

10. *Special Services and Occasions.*—Christmas, Easter, and Flower Sunday should be observed by special and appropriate services. The school may either share the worship of the church, which may be especially enriched for the occasion, or have its own appropriate service in the church, at an hour when all may join in the exercises.

Special social gatherings may be arranged for, to promote mutual acquaintance, and good will. The normal demand of children for enjoyment ought to receive appropriate recognition by the Committee. When the older classes can be led to share in the entertainment of the younger, the result is most beneficial to the school. A good Sunday School flourishes best with a strong social spirit.

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## Organizing a Sunday School

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11. *Home and School Conference.*—Provision should be made for a genuine conference of home and school at least once a year. At this meeting the minister, the Superintendent, and teachers may present the claims of the school and urge the co-operation of parents, and parents may present the needs of the school from the home standpoint. Upon both sides there is opportunity for much appreciation as well as honest criticism; and the conference will become a source of mutual profit and satisfaction.

12. *Relation of School and Church.*—Both Superintendent and teachers must recognize that the school is an important element of the church life, and should measure their success by their power to bring the young people into vital church relations. To this end the Committee on the Sunday School should co-operate with other church committees in every possible way, interesting the young in the Alliance, in the Young People's Religious Union, and in other church organizations, exerting a constant though often silent influence toward church membership. A comprehensive report of the work of the school should be returned to the church each year.



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## Method of Organizing a Branch Alliance

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In view of the need of missionary work throughout the country and of the necessity of increasing our own zeal and freshening our own religious life, it is earnestly hoped that the women of every church and society of our faith will form a Branch for co-operation in the objects of the National Alliance.

1. *Organization*.—A Branch is formed by the coming together of the women of the congregation, who agree to carry on the religious, philanthropic, and social activities for which the church should stand, accepting the purpose and methods as set forth by the National organization. Officers should be elected, by-laws for local management adopted, and plans made for carrying out the objects for which the Alliance stands.

2. *Finances*.—One dollar paid annually to a Branch constitutes any one a member of the National Alliance, entitling her to vote at its business meetings. A Branch may have a smaller local fee.

Each Branch sends one-third of its membership fees to the general treasury for the use of the National body. The remaining two-thirds are used for religious, missionary, or church purposes. This, with all other money received by a Branch, is disbursed by the Branch itself.

3. *Representation*.—All members are entitled to attend and to take part in all deliberative meetings, but only *delegates* chosen by the Branches can *vote*

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## Organizing a Branch Alliance

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at the business meetings of the National body. Every organized Branch is entitled to one delegate for any number of members under thirty, and another delegate for each thirty members additional to the first thirty.

4. *Meetings.*— It is recommended that Branches hold meetings at least once a month, notices of such meetings being given the Sunday preceding from the pulpit or in such other manner as shall best give the information, with such details as shall tend to create an interest in those not already familiar with the work, and to increase that of the members. It is further recommended that a short devotional service be held at these meetings; and, inasmuch as the primary objects of the organization are religious and denominational, it is suggested that religious and denominational subjects be chiefly chosen for consideration.

The main objects of the meetings should be to develop religious feeling, strengthen religious purpose, create increased interest in our denomination, and tend toward a spread of our own faith. While the value of all charitable and philanthropic effort is recognized and acknowledged to be essential, the Alliance adds to these religious and denominational interests.

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## Method of Organizing a Young People's Religious Union

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1. At an informal meeting of the young people, called for the purpose, a temporary chairman and secretary are chosen, the plans of organization are discussed, and a vote is carried to form a Young People's Religious Union in the — Church. A committee of three is appointed to prepare articles of organization and to report at a stated date. Another committee of three, to report at the same date, is appointed to nominate officers for the permanent organization. The temporary meeting is then adjourned to the date stated.

2. At the adjourned meeting the report of the committee upon articles of organization is received and voted upon, article by article, with free discussion, being amended, if so voted. The report of the Nominating Committee is received and accepted; and the officers nominated are voted upon and elected, and enter at once upon their duties in conformity with the articles of organization. The Secretary should send a report of the new organization to the Secretary of the National Union. This will be a signal for a letter of greeting and for the establishment of the proper social and financial relationship.

3. The articles of organization should be simple. With variations to meet local needs, they may be as follows: —

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## Suggestion for Constitution

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1. The name of this Society shall be the Young People's Religious Union of the — Church.

2. The object of the Union shall be to foster religious life and fellowship. In recognition of allegiance to a common purpose the Union adopts the watchwords of the National Union, "Truth, Worship, Service." In pledge of loyalty to the — Church, it adopts the motto "I serve."

3. *Membership.*—The membership shall consist of the young people in the Church and Sunday School over sixteen years of age, and of such other young people who show a sincere desire and a true purpose of co-operation. Signing the articles of organization shall make one a member. The minister of the church, the officers and teachers of the Sunday School, may be associate members.

4. *Officers.*—The officers shall consist of President and Vice-President, Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Executive Committee (or a Council) consisting of the four officers named, and of two other members chosen by the Union. The questions of program and of finance form the regular duties of this Committee, with such other business as may arise in the general conduct of the Union. The associate members may serve as an Advisory Board, when needed. They hold no office and have no vote.

5. *Meetings.*—Meetings shall be held weekly (fortnightly) during the church year on — evening. The first — evening in April shall be a business meeting, at which officers for the ensuing year shall be chosen.

6. *Reports.*—A report of each meeting shall be kept by the Secretary. An annual report shall be rendered to the — Church at its annual meeting, and a copy of this report shall be sent to the Secretary of the National Union.

7. *Election of Officers.*—A Nominating Committee of three shall be appointed at the last meeting in March to present a list of officers to be voted upon at the annual business meeting in April.

8. *Change in Articles.*—The articles of organization may be changed or amended at a regular meeting, by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided that notice of the proposed change has been sent with the notice of the meeting to each member by the Secretary.

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## A Young People's Religious Union

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4. *Conduct of Meetings.*—A brief devotional form for the opening of each meeting and another for the closing may be memorized, and made a permanent part of the program. Varied devotional exercises conducted by the President, or by a member chosen for the purpose, may follow the opening devotion. The program should be arranged with the view of cultivating spiritual expression and the interchange of religious thought. Wherever it is possible, a paper should be prepared by some member. The program should be arranged for several months in advance, to give time for preparation. As far as possible, the talks or papers should be original, the object of the meetings being to give each one an opportunity to advance his own thought on the subject and to promote general discussion.

The National Union publishes a list of topics annually, and the use of these topics is recommended. The *Christian Register* and the *Universalist Leader* publish weekly helps for this program, and the Secretary of the National Union is always ready to help by correspondence. Union meetings are facilitated by the use of the recommended list. A book of hymns and tunes, entitled "Jubilate Deo," has recently been prepared for the use of the National Union. Its general use in the branches will strengthen the spirit of union, as well as enrich the devotional service of each branch.

5. *Rally Meetings.*—An important feature of the Union work is the rally meeting, at which neighbor-

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## A Young People's Religious Union

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ing branches of the National Union are invited to unite with the local branch in a special meeting. A program of music, readings, and addresses should be prepared. The National officers are ready to furnish speakers for such meetings at any time. They will also visit churches to help organize and encourage the young people, and will aid in every other possible way all branches of the work.

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## The Worship of a Unitarian Church

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1. The traditional *Order of Worship* in the churches of Congregational inheritance is : —

Prayer.	Reading. ( <i>Sermon.</i> )
Singing.	Prayer.
Reading. ( <i>Scripture.</i> )	Singing.
Prayer.	Benediction.
Singing.	

This order can be modified and altered in many ways according to local tastes and conditions, but it remains the foundation of all Congregational orders of service. In a church which has no Service Book and which depends for its music altogether on the congregational singing of hymns, this traditional order may still be found the most practicable and helpful.

In churches where a choir is employed and where no Service Book is used, the following order of service is recommended : —

Organ Voluntary.  
Opening Sentences or Prayer.  
Choir Anthem.  
Scripture Reading.  
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)  
Prayer. (*People sitting with bowed heads.*)  
Choir Chant.  
Notices and Offering.  
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)  
Sermon.  
Prayer.  
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)  
Benediction. (*People standing.*)  
Organ Postlude.

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## Worship of a Unitarian Church

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In churches where the singing is altogether congregational, but where a Service Book, a Psalter, or Book of Responsive Reading, is available, the following Order of Service is recommended : —

Organ Voluntary.  
Congregational Hymn (Doxology). (*People standing.*)  
Opening Sentences and Service. (*People standing until prayer in service.*)  
Responsive Psalms.  
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)  
Scripture Reading.  
Prayer. (*People sitting with bowed heads.*)  
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)  
Sermon.  
Prayer.  
Offering.  
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)  
Benediction.  
Organ Postlude.

Most Unitarian churches employ a choir and also use some simple Service Book or Book of Responsive Readings, and a few have inherited or adopted a more or less elaborate liturgical service. The following are orders of service which have justified themselves in the experience of many churches, and are recommended for adoption wherever the local circumstances permit : —

### I.

Organ Voluntary.  
Doxology.  
Invocation.  
Anthem by the Choir.  
Responsive Reading. (*People standing.*)



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## Worship of a Unitarian Church

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Choir sings, "Now unto the King," etc.  
Choir Hymn.  
Prayer. (*People sitting with heads bowed.*)  
Response by the Choir.  
Scripture Reading.  
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)  
Notices.  
Sermon.  
Lord's Prayer. (*All uniting.*)  
Collection.  
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)  
Benediction.  
Choir and People sing "Amen."

### II.

Organ Voluntary.  
Anthem by the Choir.  
Opening Sentences and Short Prayer.  
Responsive Reading. (*People standing.*)  
Gloria by Choir and People.  
Scripture Reading.  
Anthem by the Choir.  
Prayer. (*People sitting with heads bowed.*)  
Response by the Choir.  
Notices and Offering.  
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)  
Sermon. (*At the close the minister says, "Let us unite in silent prayer."*)  
Choir chant "Lord's Prayer."  
Congregational Hymn. (*People standing.*)  
Benediction.  
Choir and People sing "Amen."

The Order of Service should be printed or legibly written, and a copy placed permanently in the pulpit for the information of visiting ministers.

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## Worship of a Unitarian Church

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Services of worship should begin promptly at the hour announced.

In the conduct of the worship great care should always be taken to preserve harmony among the various parts of the service. Reading, music, prayer, and sermon should illustrate the principle of a progressive unity. All should be dominated by the central truth or truths it is desired to impress.

Every Unitarian church should take pride in its reputation for devout behavior and for cordial hospitality. A religious service should solemnize, inspire, enlighten, and refresh those who take part in it. Strangers should be heartily welcomed, and no one suffered to go away unnoticed or lonely of heart because of lack of cordiality on the part of ushers, minister, or people.

2. The *number of services* that it may be desirable to hold on Sunday differs according to the needs of different communities and the wishes of worshipping congregations. As a rule Unitarian churches hold a morning service at 10.30 or 11 A.M., with a Sunday School at 9.30 or at 12, preferably at the later hour. To this many churches add an evening service at 7.30 or 8 P.M., or a vesper service, largely musical in character, with a short sermon, at 4 P.M. or 5 P.M. In case no second service in the home church is thought desirable, arrangements may wisely be made for holding evening or afternoon services in some neighboring community or mission station.

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## Worship of a Unitarian Church

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3. It is recommended that the *offering*, or *collection*, whether for current parish expenses or for some stated charity, be made a definite and regular part of every service. The minister may introduce it with appropriate words of Scripture, and while the ushers pass the plates the organ should be softly played or the choir chant. When the plates have been passed throughout the church, they may be carried to the communion table or in front of the pulpit, and received there by the minister, who may offer a brief prayer.

4. In some churches, reading of *notices* from the pulpit may be omitted at the discretion of the minister and trustees; but, when this is done, the more important notices should be printed in a calendar or with the order of service, and distributed in the pews.

5. *Special services* are customarily held in Unitarian churches on Christmas, Easter Sunday, and Thanksgiving Day. Whitsunday, or the second Sunday in June, is often observed as Flower Sunday, or Children's Day. The first Sunday in November may be observed as Rally Sunday, when special appeal may be made for church loyalty. Other special services may be held as dictated by local custom or appropriateness. It is recommended that anniversaries in local church history, as the date of the founding of a church or the settlement of a pastor, anniversaries of the historic days in Christian history, birthdays of great religious leaders, and national anniversaries, as Inde-

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## Worship of a Unitarian Church

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pendence Day, Patriots' Day, Decoration Day, and Forefathers' Day, be specially observed.

6. Almost all of the older Unitarian churches and many of those established in recent years hold *communion service* at least four times a year, usually on the first Sundays of January, March, May, and October, and also on Easter Sunday. This service is made primarily one of remembrance and personal consecration. The invitation is invariably extended to all who find the service helpful. No order of service can be here laid down, as it must be dictated by the custom of each independent church and the feeling of each officiating minister.

7. The *service of music* is, in the majority of Unitarian churches, intrusted to the leadership of an organist or choir-master and a choir. A considerable number of churches have congregational singing only, usually led by an organist or precentor; but the larger number employ either a quartette choir or a volunteer or paid chorus. A few churches prefer a varied musical program, changing from Sunday to Sunday, and use both vocal and instrumental selections. A well-balanced religious service requires both congregational and choir singing. The two forms are not antagonistic, but supplementary. Chorus anthems, quartette anthems, solo singing, instrumental music, and congregational hymns are all legitimate and useful methods of religious impression and expression.

8. The *organist*, who is usually, if not always,

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## Worship of a Unitarian Church

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the choir-master, should be chosen with careful attention to his or her knowledge of music, taste, skill, experience, and power of leadership. The personal quality of the organist is as important as his musical proficiency. Upon him depends, in only a little less degree than upon the minister, the efficiency and impression of the service of worship. He is the minister's first assistant, and he should be able to work cordially with the minister and strive toward the same ideals.

9. Comparisons between different forms of *choir organization* are idle, for the machinery is of less importance than the personal elements. There is in some churches a sensitiveness or even a serious division of opinion about the choir, which is made possible only by a common misunderstanding of its true place and function. It should be noted (1) that a choir should never be maintained simply because the custom of a single generation has appeared to establish it in the order of Protestant worship, (2) that a choir should never be maintained to give entertainment or any form of Sunday concert, (3) that the choir should never be maintained as a financial speculation or to secure large audiences and public notice. The choir should be regarded as an integral part of the congregation, having a special function, to lead the congregational singing, and by appropriate music to deepen the devotional feeling. The seriousness of this sacred privilege should be understood and appreciated by both choir and congregation. The congregation should endeavor to

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## Worship of a Unitarian Church

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help the singers by showing them all sympathy and respect, by refraining from captious criticism, and by recognizing the members of the choir as fellow-worshippers; and the choir should be made to feel deeply their responsibility, to promptly discharge their obligations, to sink personal ambition and petty jealousy, and devote themselves to devout and skilful rendering of their part of the common worship.

The precise composition of the choir is unimportant if the temper and spirit be right. On the expressive side a chorus best represents and leads a worshipping congregation. On the impressive side a well-balanced quartette is perhaps more effective. The best service is rendered by a paid or volunteer chorus containing a highly trained quartette, all working under the guidance of a competent director, and in close co-operation with the minister.

10. *Choir music.* Too much care cannot be given by those in charge of the musical service to the choice of appropriate anthems and other musical selections. Show pieces and operatic solos should be rigidly excluded. The choir should be led to feel that the congregation expect from the music devotional quickening, and not merely entertainment. Anthems that may be appropriately used at the climax of a service are out of place in the introductory service; and musical selections which are devotionally preparatory should not be introduced at the close of worship. The words of all the musical selections should be carefully scruti-

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## Worship of a Unitarian Church

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nized. Selections that contain words or texts expressing doctrines foreign to the spirit or faith of Unitarian congregations should be excluded. The indiscriminate use of any words which have a pious flavor or which are commended only by the excellence of the music to which they are set should be avoided. The choir-master before making his selections should invariably consult the minister, and endeavor to fit the musical selections as closely as possible to the spirit and thought of Scripture, prayer, and sermon. No pains can be too great to secure an appropriate adjustment of the choir music to the parts of the service next to them, and to unify and harmonize the whole service of worship.

11. The *congregational singing* is the most practicable and important part of the musical service. Its success involves no risk of misunderstanding and no expense. It is always the stimulus, as it is the expression, of a cheerful, earnest religious vitality. Good congregational singing flourishes wherever there is in a congregation a true religious fervor which craves expression. It languishes in congregations where the spiritual life is subjective or torpid. It cannot be secured without effort, and it will not run of itself. It requires guidance, co-operation, and the personal endeavor of the minister, choir-master, or precentor, and individual members of the congregation. The minister should always be alert to emphasize the value of good congregational singing, and to select hymns which will not only be the natural utterance of the emo-

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## Worship of a Unitarian Church

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tions of the worshippers, but also appropriate for congregational rendering. The organist or precentor should labor to build up technical proficiency, and by the contagion of personal enthusiasm arouse and guide the co-operation of the people. The people should insist on the privilege of united singing, and be alert to study new and better tunes, and to sing with unity of spirit and hearty good will.

12. The *hymn-book* should be carefully selected. A list of the hymn-books in common use in Unitarian churches will be found in the Year Book; and supplies may be ordered through the American Unitarian Association. Unitarians have been one of the most prolific of Christian bodies in the production of good hymns, but all religious poetry is not adapted to singing. Hymns are not meditative poems or rhymed didactics, but words written primarily to be sung. They are praise and prayer addressed to an object of worship. The use of garbled or altered hymns is to be deprecated. If a hymn cannot be adapted to the spirit of a Unitarian congregation without alteration, it should be excluded. The music of the hymn-books has been greatly improved in recent years; but minister and organist should alike endeavor to exclude from the common use of the congregation the trivial tunes which are still printed in the hymn-books, simply because they are familiar. The congregation should insist upon expressing its religious emotions only in noble verse set to noble music.







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